



United States Attorney's Office  
District of Columbia

Ronald C. Machen Jr.  
United States Attorney

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **MARYLAND MAN RECEIVES 27 MONTHS INCARCERATION FOR FAKING HIS OWN DEATH AND OBSTRUCTING JUSTICE**

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WASHINGTON - Benjamin Elias Brown Jr., 36, of Forestville, Md., was sentenced today to 27 months of incarceration after faking his own death to avoid a court appearance, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced.

Brown pled guilty on April 27, 2010 to charges of obstruction of an official proceeding and aiding and abetting. He was sentenced today by the Honorable Henry H. Kennedy Jr. in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. Judge Kennedy ordered the defendant to remain under three years of supervised release upon completion of his prison term.

On November 28, 2007, Brown was required to appear before the Honorable Emmet G. Sullivan in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, in a pending criminal case. The defendant knowingly and intentionally failed to appear for that hearing. He knew that a false Certificate of Death, which listed him as the decedent, along with other false information, was given to his probation officer on Nov. 27, 2007.

According to that false Certificate of Death, Brown was allegedly shot to death in the District of Columbia on Nov. 10, 2007. On Dec. 4, 2007, based upon Brown's alleged death, the Court granted the government's motion requesting that the prosecution abate the defendant's pending criminal case. By knowingly using a falsified death certificate, Brown intended to corruptly obstruct, influence and impede the official proceedings because his conduct led to the dismissal of that pending criminal case.

The scheme unraveled after a probation officer verified with the Department of Health Vital Records Office that there was no original death certificate on file for the defendant, and that the file number on the certificate submitted to the court actually belonged to another decedent. In addition, the Metropolitan Police Department had no record of any homicide occurring in the District of Columbia on Nov. 10, 2007. The funeral home had no record of handling the defendant's remains. And he had been seen in the Washington area after he purportedly died.

In announcing the sentencing, U.S. Attorney Machen commended the outstanding work of Lead Criminal Investigator Duncan Templeton and Criminal Investigators Christopher Brophy, Durand Odom, Tommy Miller, Melissa Matthews, and John Marsh of the United States Attorney's Office, as well as the efforts of Deputy United States Marshals Patrick Brennan and Joseph Ciambrone. He also praised the work of Assistant United States Attorney Karla-Dee Clark, who investigated and prosecuted the case, legal assistants Latoya Davenport, Latoya Wade, and Jacqueline Akyea, and paralegal Teesha Tobias who assisted with the case.

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